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STATE AID TO WEAK SCHOOLS.

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RELATIVE CONDITIONS OF WEAKNESS.

The word "weak" as applied to school districts or other units of school administration is a purely relative term and sets out no definite line of demarcation. It is not commonly used in the law. It frequently appears in the reports of the State departments of education. In general it refers to those units that, because of small area, little taxable property, or few children of school age, can not maintain a school taught by a qualified teacher in a comfortable, sanitary building for a term of months at least equal to the legal minimum. However, rural schools are often considered to be weak as compared with those of cities, one and two teacher schools as against the larger ones, ungraded as against graded, and those that can not offer secondary education as against those that can. State aid is given on widely varying bases of comparison. A school that is considered weak enough to need aid in one State may, under like conditions, be looked upon as fully self-supporting in another.

PURPOSES OF STATE AID.

Some of the things for which State funds are often used in a special way to better conditions in the weaker school units are as follows: Providing educational opportunity for children residing in discontinued districts and territory unorganized for school purposes; relieving emergencies and temporary states of distress in schools and districts; enabling the payment of minimum salaries for teachers; supplementing the proceeds of local tax levies in districts of low property valuation; aiding in the attainment of higher standards; meeting in part or in full the salaries of supervisors and helping

teachers; providing secondary education for pupils that live far from high schools; and encouraging the establishment of school libraries. The aid may be given in amounts and under conditions fixed in detail by the laws; it may be administered by school officials acting with wide discretionary powers; or the regular apportionments of State funds may be so arranged as to favor the naturally less fortunate school units.

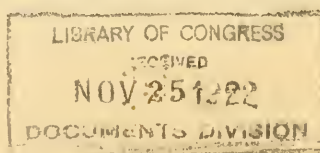
With but one or two exceptions the States have fixed by law certain requirements, such as number of school census children, area, or valuation of taxable property, below which a district may not be created. One or more of these requirements and of others, such as average daily attendance and length of term, must be met or the district may not be permitted to continue its existence after having been created. Among the weakest places in the system are those districts and schools that border closely on the minima set for establishment or continuance and those areas of the United States that because of sparse settlement or inaccessibility or other reasons are locally unorganized for school purposes.

#### DISCONTINUED DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS.

Small districts and schools that have not been able to meet the minimal requirements and have had to be discontinued, or being able to meet the requirements have voluntarily discontinued, are often the recipients of State aid. This may be either a fixed sum or reimbursement for the tuition of the children in some other school and their transportation thither. Kansas, Maine, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin grant such help.

#### UNORGANIZED TERRITORY.

The territory unorganized for school purposes is probably much larger than is generally assumed. Approximately 48 per cent of the area of Maine is in this class. The State has enacted laws providing educational facilities largely by means of State aid for the unorganized section. The administration of the entire area is under the immediate direction of the State superintendent. Annually \$35,000 is appropriated to employ teachers and establish schools for the children living there or to pay their tuition and transportation or board in full or in part at elementary or secondary schools in organized districts. The income from a local per capita tax of \$3 for each male person over 21 years of age is used to supplement the State appropriation. In 1920, 41 such schools employing 41 teachers and registering 681 pupils were maintained. Sixty-one pupils were sent to organized townships, and \$4,821 was spent for transportation.



The New Hampshire State Board of Education may provide schools in any unorganized parts of the State or pay the transportation or board and tuition of children in such places at any suitable school. A county superintendent in South Dakota causes a census to be taken of all school children residing in the territory of the county not organized into school districts. In the regular apportionment of State school money made to the public-school corporations in proportion to the number of children in each, the amount due the children in unorganized territory is credited to a fund designated as the "School fund for unorganized territory." This fund may be increased by the proceeds of a local tax and is used by the county commissioners to provide education, both elementary and high school, for children in unorganized territory by the payment of their transportation to and tuition in established schools. Room and board may be furnished instead of transportation. In Minnesota the State board of education may grant to the county board of education for unorganized territory not more than \$50 a pupil annually to pay the transportation or board of children residing in such territory. A county superintendent in Arizona may pay \$10 per month per child toward the education of children living in remote places.

#### EMERGENCIES AND TEMPORARY CONDITIONS.

Direct appropriations to meet unusual conditions of temporary weakness are made in Colorado and Iowa. The former sets aside \$10,000 annually to help any district that on account of unavoidable misfortune or casualty is in financial distress. The latter has a special appropriation of \$50,000 to relieve bad conditions in the schools of the mining camps. The commissioner of education of Vermont may give such aid as he deems proper in establishing and equipping a new school. At the time of the regular apportionment of State distributive funds in July and January of each year the State superintendent of Nevada sets aside \$3,000 as an emergency fund. It is used to pay teachers' salaries in new districts formed after the regular apportionment, is limited to \$250 for any district, and not more than one apportionment from the fund can be made to any one district.

In 1919 and 1920 several of the State legislatures enacted laws granting to schools that because of epidemics have short terms or low attendance records exemptions from the penalties usually attached to such delinquencies. The purpose was to meet the unusual situation created by the Spanish influenza. The necessity for these laws has largely passed and, it is to be hoped, will not again arise. No attempt is made here to give them in detail.

## GENERAL LAWS REQUIRING OR PERMITTING AID TO WEAKER SCHOOLS.

Assistance from State funds may be given in many cases under a law couched in general terms. The authority to determine the amounts and conditions either by general regulations or for each case as it arises is left with the State or county administrative officers. One example of this is the revolving fund of \$100,000 to \$150,000 in Alabama, 80 per cent of which is to be used by the State board for lengthening school terms and otherwise bettering conditions in rural schools. The Legislature of Mississippi in 1920 appropriated \$1,268,721 to be used in the subsequent biennium for equalizing school terms and teachers' salaries. Ten per cent of the proceeds of a State school tax is divided among the counties of New Jersey in such manner as the State board may determine. The commissioner of education of New York may give from State funds to any district or city that has maintained school less than 180 days, or employed an extra teacher for a shorter time than 180 days, such part of the regular district or teacher quota as seems to him equitable. He has the same freedom in distributing funds to school neighborhoods that adjoin another State and are set off by the district commissioner and given permission to send the children to school in such adjoining State. The State council of education in Pennsylvania is given power to equalize educational advantages in the State through special appropriations or by other means. The consolidated school fund of Vermont, a State fund made up of the income from the permanent school fund, a State tax of 10 cents on each \$1 of the grand list, and certain other revenues, is apportioned annually by the State board of education in fixed amounts for 11 different purposes. Any remainder is used by the State board for aiding elementary schools in rural communities and equalizing educational opportunities.

A county board of education in Alabama is required to distribute the county's allotment of State funds so as to provide, as nearly as practicable, school terms of equal duration, exclusive of any local funds raised by the district. In Florida, Georgia, and Kentucky county boards administer the schools, except those in special districts, and may favor the weaker ones in the distribution of funds. The parish boards of Louisiana have similar powers. The district board of education in each of the 40 county school districts of Utah may "do all things needful for the maintenance, prosperity, and success of the schools." If it sees fit to do so, it may give aid to the weaker schools.

## AID THROUGH THE REGULAR APPORTIONMENT.

Aid to the weaker units of school administration is frequently found in the method of distributing State funds. The small schools

suffer most when apportionments of State money are made to the counties in proportion to the number of children between certain ages, usually 6 to 21, and by the counties to the districts on the same basis. Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin distribute funds wholly or very largely in this way.

There is more opportunity for giving direct aid to the weak schools if the State funds are distributed to the counties in proportion to the number of school children and within the county are apportioned to the districts or schools under some such general terms as have already been mentioned or in accordance with laws designed to help the smaller units. Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Utah, and Wyoming follow some form of this plan.

Some States make certain concessions to small districts in computing the regular apportionment. No district in Idaho is considered as having fewer than 15 pupils for purposes of apportioning the 40 per cent of the State fund that is given on the basis of the number of school children in each district. In Maine each town is allowed an apportionment for at least 1,500 days of aggregate attendance even though the actual aggregate attendance for the previous year was less than that.

Apportionments made to schools on the basis of budgets are a direct aid to the weaker ones. In Arizona the county school superintendent must apportion to each one or two room rural school enough funds for a minimum term of eight months but not less than \$1,500 for a one-room school and \$3,000 for a two-room school. The state department of Delaware handles the accounts of the schools, excepting those of a few independent districts, and determines their needs from annual budgets submitted by the local trustees.

#### ALLOWANCES TO EACH TEACHER AND EQUAL AMOUNTS TO EACH UNIT.

Divisions of funds are made in some cases on a basis of a fixed amount for each teacher employed. In other cases the number of teaching positions is computed by allowing one for each group of school children containing a certain number or fraction of that number, and a definite sum of money allotted to each of these positions. Sometimes a fixed amount is given to a district or school. These three ways of distributing funds are advantageous to small schools. California allows \$700 from State funds for each teacher in a district, counting one teacher for every 35 pupils or fraction of 35 in average daily attendance, and an additional teacher for each 300 children in

average daily attendance. If within the county, or city and county, the total number of children attending in districts that have an average daily attendance of less than 300 is 500 or more, the amount for an additional teacher is allowed for each 500. It is used by the superintendent for an emergency or supervisory fund.

The county superintendent of Idaho apportions 40 per cent of the State fund on a basis of the number of teachers employed in each district. In Maine \$100 is given for each teaching position and a corresponding fractional part of \$100 for each fractional position. Fixed allowances to aid toward teachers' salaries are paid the towns in Massachusetts from the proceeds of the income tax. The amount for a teacher is based on training, experience, and total salary.

The State superintendent of Missouri apportions much of the State public-school fund in a fixed amount for each teacher, principal, and superintendent. One-half of all the royalties and rentals paid by the United States to Montana is divided among the counties in proportion to the number of teachers employed for more than six months the preceding year. Within the county 60 per cent of this fund is distributed to the districts on the same basis. One-fourth of the State fund of Nebraska is divided equally among the districts of the State. The State distributive fund of Nevada provides an annual amount of \$275 for each teacher, computing the number of teachers by allowing each district one teacher for every 30 census children or fraction of 30 equal to 15 or more.

Ninety per cent of the amount of the State school tax paid by each county in New Jersey is returned to the county and apportioned to the districts in fixed amounts for each superintendent, principal, supervisor, and teacher employed. Any surplus is divided on other bases. Ten per cent is held as a reserve fund that the State board may divide among the counties in any way it deems best.

The State public-school fund of North Carolina is apportioned annually to each county in part payment of salaries of superintendents and teachers. The county must levy a special tax, not to exceed 35 cents, sufficient to make up an amount that will maintain all the schools for six months. If a 35-cent levy will not do this, the State must supply the deficit. A county auditor in Ohio allots a district \$30 for each teacher employed and prorates the balance according to the number of pupils in average daily attendance. The State makes up the deficit in any district that has levied the maximum of local tax and then has not money enough to pay its teachers the minimum salary for a term of eight months.

The State superintendent of Pennsylvania deducts any items of special appropriation from the school fund and distributes one-half



the remainder according to the number of paid teachers regularly employed. There is an annual appropriation of \$120,000 in Rhode Island from which each school receives \$100.

Out of the State school fund of Tennessee a lump sum of \$6,000 is given to each county for equalization purposes, if the county has levied a tax of 30 cents or one that will produce \$5 for each child 6 to 21 years of age. From an additional State tax of 3 cents, \$2,000 is allotted each of the 95 counties and the remainder divided pro rata on a basis of average daily attendance at the elementary schools.

One-half of the royalties, not to exceed \$2,000,000 a year, on oil and mineral lands paid by the United States to the State of Wyoming is distributed as a school fund to the counties on a basis of the number of teachers employed in each.

#### MINIMUM SALARIES FOR TEACHERS.

State aid to pay a legal minimum of teachers' salaries is designed to be and is of most help to those units that would have the greatest difficulty in raising the necessary funds. In Colorado, if a maximum county levy of 5 mills is insufficient to pay every teacher a minimum salary of \$75 a month, the State superintendent must, before he apportions the public school income fund of the State, apportion to the county enough to make up the deficit. In Maryland any county that can not pay the minimum legal salaries out of such amounts available for the current expenses of the school as are equal to a tax levy of 67 cents shall share in a State equalization fund. Twenty-four per cent of the budget must be for purposes other than teachers' salaries. This is directly helpful to 15 counties of the State. Pennsylvania aids in paying the minima of teachers' salaries, the higher percentages being given to the weaker districts. In 1909 and again in 1919 Rhode Island made provisions, still effective, to aid the towns in paying the minimal salaries to teachers. An appropriation of \$110,000 in Vermont is used to reimburse towns for any excess of \$8 a week that has been paid each rural teacher for salary. In Wisconsin special aid may be given to any district that has an assessed valuation of \$75,000 or less to pay the teacher the minimum legal salary for a term of not more than eight months. From the entire amount necessary for that purpose there is deducted the total of the regular State and county apportionments to the district plus one-half of 1 per cent of the district's assessed valuation. The difference is paid by the State as special aid. If the teacher remains in the school more than one year, additional aid is given to pay an increase in salary.

## ASSESSED VALUATION.

Weakness as expressed by valuation of taxable property is often made the basis of aid. In Connecticut, towns with a grand list of two and one-half millions of dollars or less are given percentages of the total salaries paid, the weaker towns receiving the higher percentages. Special aid is given those that have levied a 6-mill tax and still have insufficient funds.

Seventeen per cent of the State fund is given by counties of Idaho to districts that, after having levied a tax of 10 mills, can not maintain a term of seven months. In Indiana 5.2 per cent of the proceeds of State poll and property taxes for school purposes is used for special aid to townships or towns that, having levied a 25-cent tax, can not maintain a school for six months, or with a 40-cent tax can not maintain it for seven months. The fund may be used only for the payment of teachers' salaries and is given to the township in an amount necessary to bring the school term up to the legal minimum. Special State aid is given in Kansas in an amount sufficient to make up three-fourths of the additional sum necessary to maintain school seven months, if a local tax levy of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  mills has proved to be inadequate.

Massachusetts gives supplementary aid from an income tax. It is distributed on the relation that the average membership in the public day schools bears to the total assessed valuation of the town. To the towns with the smaller quotients the larger amounts of aid are given. The income from the Massachusetts school fund is distributed to towns with an assessed valuation of less than two and one-half millions on the basis of an assured minimum of five items.

To any district in Minnesota whose tax levy for maintenance is between 20 mills and 32 mills the State will pay as aid one-third of the excess above 20 mills. If the levy exceeds 32 mills it will pay, in addition to the above amount, one-half the excess above 32 mills. The limiting provisos to this aid are that it shall not be given if a levy of 20 mills will yield \$100 or more for each pupil enrolled in the schools of the district, and in no case shall the aid be more than \$200 for each elementary teacher employed and \$250 for each high-school or special teacher employed.

State aid in Missouri is given to weak districts to make up the deficit in the amount of money necessary to enable them to hold a term of eight months. It is conditioned on the assessed valuation of the district, the local tax levy, the number of teachers employed, their certification, and the average daily attendance. It is limited to \$300 for a district that employs one teacher and \$500 for one that employs two or more teachers.

Nebraska furnishes aid from State funds, under conditions relating to area and number of school children, to districts that have

levied a tax of 40 mills and can not maintain a school for nine months. A reserve fund of \$20,000 annually is set apart in Nevada and used to make up deficits in those counties and districts that have levied taxes of 40 and 15 cents, respectively, and have not the amount required by law for school purposes.

New Hampshire towns must levy an annual school tax of 35 cents, and any district in which this will not maintain the schools must levy a tax sufficient to make up the deficit. If in any district an amount equal to one-half of 1 per cent of the assessed valuation will not maintain the schools, the balance necessary is provided from State funds in an amount not to exceed \$6,000 for any district or all the districts of any town. The State board has authority to withhold from general distribution not to exceed 5 per cent of the appropriation for State aid, which it may use to furnish additional aid to districts where a special need exists.

The moneys appropriated by the State of New York for the common schools are largely in part payment of teachers' salaries and are distributed in fixed amounts, depending on the population or assessed valuation of the city, town, or district. A Rhode Island town in which the taxable property is not adequate at the average rate of taxation in the State to provide schools of a high standard is helped to make up the deficit.

A school in South Carolina that has a term of less than 100 days may be given an amount equal to that raised by special district tax, but not more than \$100, from a special appropriation of \$60,000 for increasing the average length of the school term. If a district has levied an 8-mill tax for current expenses and complied with definite legal regulations in regard to attendance, number of pupils per teacher, and teachers' salaries, the State will pay from an appropriation of \$140,000 any deficit incurred in maintaining the schools of the district for seven months.

The general school fund of West Virginia is used, among other things, to help pay the minimum salaries to elementary teachers in districts where the maximum levy of 40 cents for the purpose is not sufficient; to supplement the maintenance fund in districts where the maximum levy of 15 cents for that purpose will not pay the contingent expenses for the minimum term; and to give an amount toward the salaries of elementary teachers equal to the amount raised from an additional local levy in excess of 40 cents on each \$100.

#### SPECIAL APPROPRIATIONS TO ENCOURAGE HIGHER STANDARDS.

Special appropriations are made and distributed to those schools that meet certain standards set by the State. From a special appro-

priation of \$100,000 annually the State superintendent of Iowa gives to any rural district \$6 for each pupil that attended the schools of the district at least six months in the previous year, if the schools have met the requirements as to quality of teaching, general equipment, heating and ventilation, lighting, seating, water supply, care of grounds, safety against fire, and other things prescribed by the superintendent for a standard school. An equalization fund of \$100,000 is deducted from the State school fund of Maine, and a part of this is apportioned to towns in which a local tax rate considerably above the average for the State does not produce funds enough to secure a reasonable standard of educational efficiency. The State superintendent by special investigation determines the need and the amount to be given to any town. Part of the Minnesota fund for special aid is distributed to schools that meet seven different minimum standards. North Dakota sets standards for three classes each of State rural, State graded, and consolidated schools. Aid is given in fixed amounts for each class and kind. South Carolina has an appropriation of \$187,500, given in fixed amounts to rural graded schools that meet certain legal requirements. State rural schools of South Dakota are aided if they meet definite standards established by law. For the year 1921-22 the Legislature of Texas appropriated \$3,000,000 for special aid to schools of less than 500 scholastic enrollment in order that all might have a minimum term of six months and, if possible, a maximum of nine months. Wisconsin allows \$50 annually to a rural school that has complied with certain regulations as to length of term, building, and equipment.

#### AID IN ERECTING BUILDINGS.

Aid is sometimes given wholly for the purpose of erecting and equipping schoolhouses. While it is not usually confined to weak districts, limits set on the amount for any one school and the conditions under which aid is given make it proportionately more helpful to the small schools than the large ones. Alabama has such a fund, the minimum amount to any one school being \$400. Any district in New Mexico that is in imperative need of money for school purposes may be given State aid in an amount not to exceed \$300 for erecting or completing a building and of \$50 for furnishing a school room. Loans may be made from the State literary fund of North Carolina to any county for the purpose of building and improving schoolhouses, dormitories, and teacherages. They are repayable in 10 equal annual installments with interest at 4 per cent. Aid in constructing school buildings is given under certain condi-

tions from State funds in Oklahoma to maximum amounts of \$1,250 for a union graded school and \$2,500 for a consolidated school. South Carolina has a fund of \$60,000 to assist in erecting buildings. It is limited to one-fourth the cost of the building. Loans are made to districts from the principal of the literary fund of Virginia, for the purpose of erecting or enlarging the schoolhouses, in an amount not to exceed \$2,500 or two-thirds the cost for any one building.

#### SUPERVISORS AND HELPING TEACHERS.

Another line of State help that is more directly beneficial to the weak schools than to the strong ones is the employment of supervisors or helping teachers whose salaries are paid in whole or in part from State funds. Alabama uses part of its revolving fund for this purpose. Maryland makes a deduction from the State school fund to assist in paying the salaries of helping teachers. Wisconsin pays the salaries and traveling expenses of one or two supervising teachers in each county. From the State school fund of Tennessee two amounts are set aside, one of \$15,000 to help in paying adequate salaries to superintendents and another of \$100,000 to aid in consolidation of schools and supervision of teaching. Other States that pay part or all of the salaries of superintendents and supervisors whose time is given largely to the smaller schools are Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire, Nevada, Virginia, New York, Delaware, New Jersey, California, and Connecticut.

#### TUITION OF NONRESIDENT HIGH-SCHOOL PUPILS.

State aid is given to high schools in many ways and on varied bases. To those districts that can not offer secondary instruction it usually takes the form of the payment or reimbursement of the tuition charged their secondary students when attending high school in other districts. Two-thirds of the amount spent by any town in Maine for the tuition of its pupils in the secondary schools of another town is provided from State funds. The annual amount given by the State is limited to \$40 a pupil or \$600 to any town. The minimum assured to any town with an assessed valuation of less than \$2,500,000 in Massachusetts includes an item for the tuition of high-school pupils in other towns. Minnesota provides \$7 a school month for the tuition of nonresident high-school pupils. New Jersey allows \$25 a student annually under similar conditions. The literature fund of New York is given to academies and contains an item of \$50 a year for each nonresident academic pupil receiving instruction in the city or district. Vermont gives aid, in amounts graduated according to the grand list of the town, to towns with a

grand list of less than \$15,000 that maintain a high school or pay tuition for their high-school pupils in some other town.

#### SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

Aid to assist in establishing school libraries in rural communities is given by a number of the States. It is especially helpful to the smaller schools. In general the amount given is not large, is conditioned on equal amounts from local or county sources, or both, and is strictly limited to the purchase of library books for the school. Possibly no other form of State aid has yielded so large a proportionate return. Alabama, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin give some assistance of this kind either directly or indirectly.



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